

26 | demonstrated success in significantly reducing the amount of
 27 | undesirable nutrients in the state's waters, and

28 | WHEREAS, physically removing unwanted vegetation and the
 29 | nutrients contained therein will improve the health and ecology
 30 | of the state's waters, benefit anglers and other fishing
 31 | enthusiasts, and encourage tourism, and

32 | WHEREAS, repurposing legacy nutrients trapped in our
 33 | waterways will improve local economies by allowing for a new,
 34 | natural, and local source of soil amendments or compost for
 35 | agricultural purposes that will also give way to innovation and
 36 | job creation in the state, NOW, THEREFORE,

37 |

38 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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40 | Section 1. (1) The Fish and Wildlife Conservation
 41 | Commission, in partnership with the Institute of Food and
 42 | Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida and the Water
 43 | School at Florida Gulf Coast University, shall study the
 44 | strategic use of innovative biomass nutrient removal
 45 | technologies and mechanical aquatic plant management techniques
 46 | where ecologically and technically feasible within the Lake
 47 | Okeechobee watershed.

48 | (2) At a minimum, the study must:

49 | (a) Determine the benefits and drawbacks of biomass
 50 | nutrient removal technologies and mechanical aquatic plant

51 management techniques.

52 (b) Document the reduction in nutrients for each aquatic
53 plant acre mechanically harvested on an acre-for-acre basis.

54 (c) If hay has been applied, analyze the harvested hay to
55 provide data on nutrient content and soil nutrient content. The
56 data should provide metrics for nutrient removal and nutrient
57 application to upland sites and the feasibility of both.

58 (d) Provide traceability and accountability for total
59 nutrient removal.

60 (e) Determine the feasibility and sustainability of
61 increased scalability of biomass nutrient removal technologies
62 and mechanical aquatic plant management techniques statewide.

63 (3) The commission shall submit to the Governor, President
64 of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by
65 February 1, 2023, a report on the study of the strategic use of
66 innovative biomass nutrient removal technologies and mechanical
67 aquatic plant management techniques, including recommendations
68 for statutory changes.

69 Section 2. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, the sum of \$1.5
70 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
71 appropriated to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
72 Of these funds, \$1 million must be used for mechanical
73 harvesting in Lake Okeechobee and \$500,000 must be used to
74 contract with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at
75 the University of Florida and the Water School at Florida Gulf

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76 | Coast University to study the strategic use of innovative
77 | biomass nutrient removal technologies and mechanical aquatic
78 | plant management techniques pursuant to this act.

79 | Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.